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BY AUSTIN DICKINSON, A. M.
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THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

LUKE xxiv. 26.—Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory ?

This question occurs in our Saviour's interesting conversation with the two disciples going to Emmaus. It was on the third day after His crucifixion, that He, in a mysterious manner, drew near and conversed with them, as they walked and were expressing their astonishment at the events, which had just " come to pass." We think it strange, that the intimate companions of the Lord Jesus should have been so ignorant of the real design of His mission to our world. We think it strange, that they should have been so overwhelmed with surprise and consternation, when He was condemned, crucified, and buried ; and that they should have been so astonished at His resurrection ; when these events had been distinctly foretold by the prophets, and by the Saviour himself. We think it strange, that the Jews, as a nation, should have continued in obstinate unbelief of His divine Messiahship—especially after His Resurrection, which established the faith of His disciples, and which ought to convince the world.

Is there not, however, something of the same kind of ignorance and unbelief among ourselves ; though we have always had in our hands

the writings of the prophets, and the plain corresponding history of their fulfilment ? Yes, even the good man, the humble believer of the New Testament, sometimes thinks it almost unaccountable, and incredible, that "the Lord of life and glory, the Creator of all things," Should move from His throne ; Should come down to our guilty world ; Should assume our nature ; Should, in that nature, submit to a life of poverty and toil ; Should consent to be arraigned at a human tribunal ; To be condemned by lying testimony ; And finally to endure an ignominious death ! The heart of the Christian, at some moments, revolts with horrour at the narration ; and is almost unwilling to believe it. Whilst there are others, who actually laugh at the Scriptural account,—or at least explain away its meaning,—as utterly unworthy of the majesty of God, and unnecessary for the safety of man, and therefore not to be believed. But to all these the Omniscient Saviour replies, "*O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken ; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory ?*"

Our present object will be to answer this question, not by a reference to the ancient prophecies, but by showing, *that there was infinite propriety and wisdom in the humiliation and sufferings of Christ.* In order to show this, we must inquire, what has been gained by His sufferings ? The question before us then is,

WHAT HAS BEEN GAINED TO THE UNIVERSE BY THE SUFFERINGS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ?

In answering this question we shall think it proper to repeat much of what "holy men, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," have told us on the subject. And,

I. IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, AN INNUMERABLE MULTITUDE OF OUR RACE WILL BE RAISED FROM A STATE OF SINFUL DEGRADATION AND MISERY, AND EXALTED TO THE SOCIETY OF ANGELS AND OF GOD.

Says the beloved John, rapt in prophetic vision, "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." And what are the employments of this great multitude ? and who are their associates ? The same John tells us, they were employed in praising

God.—“They cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation to our God that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.’” And concerning their associates, he tells us, “all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God.” And what is the history of these beings, collected out of all nations?—from what situation did they come? how were they qualified to associate with angels in the worship of heaven? The answer of the Spirit is, “These are they, which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He, that sitteth upon the throne, shall dwell among them.”

It appears, then, that this multitude were once in a world of trouble and pollution; but have been washed in a Redeemer’s blood; and therefore are qualified to serve God in His temple above; and to associate with God and angels. It appears also from another scripture, that “without shedding of blood there is no remission.” All this elevation, then, of that great multitude, which man could never comit, and of all who ascend from earth to heaven, is in consequence of the “shedding of blood”—in consequence of the “sufferings of Christ.”

And brethren, dwell for one moment on the change of character and situation here wrought through Christ. Once that great multitude were sinners of every description—slaves of every unhallowed lust!—some of them “thieves, drunkards, swearers, liars, fornicators, adulterers, murderers;”—all of them “haters of God”!—But now they are “washed—purified—sanctified—in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Once their understandings were all darkened—their affections groveling;—willing slaves of Satan—they sought the company of wicked men and devils! Now their minds are enlightened from the Sun of Righteousness;—refined by the purity of the heavens—they mingle with bright angels! Once they were far from God—far from Christ. Now they are “brought nigh by the blood of Christ”—“see God face to face”—“see as they are seen”—“know as they are known”: Now they shine forth “in the likeness of Christ”—put on “the robes of His righteousness”—“walk with Him in white”—“converse with Him as a man with his friend.”

All this change of character and situation, let me repeat, is in consequence of “the sufferings of Christ.” These beings have been redeemed from prisons of darkness and pollution, and elevated to “mansions of glory,”—“not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish

and without spot." Ought not Christ, then, to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? But, in addition to their present elevation, I would next remark,

II. IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, ALL, WHO FINALLY BELIEVE AND TRUST IN HIM, AS THE SON OF GOD, WILL BE CONFIRMED IN A STATE OF PERFECT HOLINESS AND HAPPINESS FOR EVER.

The nature of the first Covenant, which God proposed to man, was, " Do this and thou shalt live"—Yield perfect obedience to the Law of God, and ye shall be happy in the favour of God—But " the soul that sinneth, it shall die." " Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things written in the book of the Law to do them." So that under that Covenant, man must have depended for safety and happiness on his continued obedience to the Law of God, without *any assurance that God would uphold him by His power*. Now even *that* was a good Covenant, and perfectly *reasonable*, and such as man is utterly without excuse for having broken; because the *Law* was reasonable—" The Law was holy, just and good." But still, (thanks to boundless mercy and forbearance,) instead of blasting the rebels at once to hell! Christ, by His voluntary sufferings, has become " the Mediator of a *better Covenant*, which was established upon *better promises*." The substance of this New Covenant, (formed by the " Three that bear record in heaven,") was, That if Christ would descend from heaven to earth, and, in human nature, make atonement for sinners, by laying down His own life, the Holy Spirit should be given to sanctify all that should believe, and to uphold them for ever in a state of purity and glory. So that the endless security of all true Christians, on earth and in heaven, now depends, not on any confidence in their own strength, or greater attainments in holiness, than those of Adam, but on the *promise* and power of Almighty God, granted *through the blood of the everlasting Covenant*.

Christ never would have left His Throne for a Cross, without a "sure word of promise" from the Eternal Father, that He should " see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." He never would have redeemed sinners, with His own blood, without a sure warrant from the Court of Heaven, that *of all that the Father had given Him, He should lose none*; but that *they should be kept by the power of God, through faith unto eternal salvation*. With " more than twelve legions of angels" at His command, He never would have surrendered Himself to be condemned by mortals, and to be " crucified by wicked hands," had He

not known distinctly the everlasting benefits to be accomplished by His death. He never would have died upon uncertainties. He never would have purchased pardon and restoration for countless millions of rebels against His own government, if, after they were restored, they must still be left liable every moment to fall off from His kingdom, and again to rebel. No ;—long before He entered on this errand of reconciliation, it was stipulated in heaven, that all who should be reclaimed by His mediation, should maintain for ever their allegiance to His throne. It was “ for the joy thus set before Him, that He endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

In exact accordance with these sentiments, the Saviour, when He appeared on our world, said of Himself, “ I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live *for ever*. And the bread, that I will give, is my flesh ; which I will give for the life of the world. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath *eternal* life. I give unto them *eternal* life ; neither shall any pluck them out of my hands.”

In a similar strain of assurance the apostle Paul says, “ By one offering He hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified. The wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is *eternal* life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The apostle reasons strongly and triumphantly, when he says, “ If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout —with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we, who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air ; and so shall we be *ever* with the Lord.” No possibility of again falling off from His kingdom.

But what mortal or immortal Power can speak the *privilege* of believers, in being thus *confirmed for ever* in a state of perfect Holiness and union to the Saviour ? Oh ! could the thought once enter their minds, that *possibly*, after millions and millions of ages, they might again become “ THE ENEMIES of God” !—Oh ! it would send a thrill of horror through all their ranks !—it would suspend for ever their songs of victory !—it would throw darkness impenetrable over all that Eternity, which is before them ! it would more than half eclipse the splendours of the Sun of Righteousness ! But fear not, ye redeemed ! There is no such *possibility*. The promise and *oath* of Jehovah are pledged for your security. The Covenant of Redemption, by which

ye were given to Christ, before the foundation of the world, as well as the Covenant of Grace, by the acceptance of which ye have bound yourselves to His throne, is an "*Everlasting Covenant*."

And now, brethren, let it be remembered, that this *everlasting elevation* of human character—this eternal *confirmation* of believers in glory and happiness, is all in consequence of *the shedding of blood*—in consequence of the *sufferings of Christ*. Ought not Christ then to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? But the benefits of Christ's death are not confined to men. Which leads me to observe,

III. IN THE PROPITIATORY SACRIFICE OF CHRIST, the *Divine Character*, in its various attributes, is GLORIOUSLY DISPLAYED.

The *wisdom* of God is particularly manifested in this transaction. When the immutable Law of God was broken, and countless millions were involved in its curse, no mind of man—no mind of angel—could have contrived, how any of the transgressors might escape punishment, and yet the justice of God be maintained. The declaration had gone forth, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." But Infinite Wisdom saw, that it was in the power of One of the Persons of the adorable Trinity, in a short period of humiliation and suffering, to make such an Atonement as would, in the view of an intelligent Universe, be considered a sufficient Substitute for the eternal punishment of the transgressors. Infinite Wisdom adopted this Substitute. The Sacrifice has voluntarily been made. And the everlasting benefits of it are now freely enjoyed by all who are pleased to accept of it in faith; by all who will now *look unto Him and be saved*.

In making this Atonement, inconceivably great as Christ's sufferings were, He did not, however, endure those *remorseful pangs*—those *eternal agonies of despair*, which He foresaw must come upon the rebellious, if left without redemption to *increase for ever in guilt*! No one would venture to say this; for in such a substitution there would have been no *gain*,—consequently no *wisdom*. Indeed it would be awfully derogating from His infinite wisdom and merit, to suppose, that He could in no way make atonement for the sins of mortals without such endurance. It was *infinite dignity*, united with human nature suffering on the Cross, which gave such inconceivable value to His sacrifice, and which, with His obedience, "magnified the Law and made it honourable." It was thus, that "by one offering, He finished" that stupendous plan, through which "God can now be just, and yet justify the ungodly, who repent and believe in Jesus." Here is a work of divine

wisdom, which *angels have desired to look into*; but which saints and angels will contemplate with increasing wonder and joy for ever.

The *benevolence* of God is likewise conspicuously manifested in the sufferings of Christ. It is true, that in the other works of God there are many indications of divine benevolence. In the glorious canopy of the heavens—in the splendid and orderly arrangement of the sun, moon, and unnumbered stars—and in the rich and varied garniture, which is spread over the face of the earth—we see every where evidences of good design—evidences that God delights in the happiness of His creatures. But still, it is to be considered, that all this beautiful and glorious structure of the heavens and earth was fitted up without any *expense* on the part of Deity—without any *sacrifice* on the part of God. God was infinitely rich and powerful. He had only to *speak, and it was done*. He had only to *command*, and the pillars of heaven, as well as the foundations of earth, “*stood fast*.” He had only to put forth an effort of *His will*, and earth and skies were clothed in grandeur and beauty. So that in doing all this there was no expense, or sacrifice, on the part of God, to demonstrate His benevolence.

But O, when we come to the stupendous work of man's redemption—when we come to behold the Son of God expiring in agony on the Cross,—here we find a perfect demonstration of Divine benevolence. Here we find the Great God our Creator actually making a sacrifice of what was most dear to Him, for the benefit of His creatures. Here we find the Great Father of mercies, “that He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us,” actually surrendering His own Son to death, that we might live! God “**SPARED NOT HIS OWN SON, BUT DELIVERED HIM UP FOR US ALL!**” Here is benevolence indeed! And what renders the benevolence of this sacrifice still more conspicuous is, that it was a giving away from God for the benefit of His *enemies!*—for the benefit of those, who were impious *rebels* against His holy Government, and *deserving* nothing better than “*banishment from His presence*.” Here is a manifestation of Divine benevolence infinitely above all human experience or conception. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends; but God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us.”

The *justice* of God is likewise conspicuously manifested in the sufferings of Christ. Had there been no Mediator between God and rebel man—had the punishment of sin fallen directly upon the head of the transgressors—it would have been only an act of common justice—only what might have been expected, as a matter of course, from the

character of God's Law. It could not have been considered by superior beings as any very extraordinary exhibition of Divine justice, had this little world with all its guilty population been consigned to hell! Among the multitude of other worlds, which still maintained their allegiance to the Most High, this lost province might, in the course of ages, have been forgotten. In the revolution of eternal ages, even angels might have forgotten, that their God was "a God of justice"; and thus other angels might have been lifted up with pride; and the inhabitants of other worlds might have been tempted to rebel against their rightful Sovereign. And thus, in the course of ages, one spirit of disaffection and revolt might have spread through all the kingdoms and provinces of Jehovah's empire.

But when, (as the case now stands)—when, instead of the punishment's falling directly upon the transgressors, its equivalent, in significance and importance, is sustained by One, who is known in all worlds—when, after our dreadful revolt, the Angel of the Covenant is seen bending from His throne, and hastening His downward way, and interposing His own person between the avenging stroke of Divine Law and crimes of our revolted world;—and when there is no holding back of that stroke—but all its weight—all its vengeance comes upon Him, as our Substitute—when "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"—Oh! here is an exhibition of Divine justice, which can never be forgotten! Here is an exhibition, which must strike a solemn awe of God's justice throughout all worlds, and be remembered for ever!

Thus in the sufferings of Christ the character of God is gloriously displayed. His *wisdom*, His *benevolence*, His *justice*, are all conspicuously, and at the same time harmoniously manifested. Here "mercy and truth have met together,—righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Ought not Christ, then, to have suffered these things? Yes, verily "it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." This leads me to observe,

IV. IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE, THAT ALL HOLY BEINGS ARE INSPIRED WITH ENTIRE CONFIDENCE IN THE STABILITY AND EXCELLENCY OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT; AND WILL THUS BE KEPT IN THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO HIS THRONE.

Previous to the sufferings of Christ, there was no such experimental proof, as we now have, but that God might change His purposes, and

relax the severity of His judgments, should increasing multitudes rebel against Him. It is true that rebel angels had been thrown from heaven "into chains of darkness." But this was no demonstration, that other, and mightier, and more beloved angels, should they rebel, would be punished with like severity. But when He, who is higher and mightier than all angels, and infinitely more beloved than all created intelligences—when He experienced the wrath of the Almighty Father, on placing himself in the room of sinners—O then a demonstration was given, that the demands of Eternal Justice would never be relaxed on account of the might, or the multitude, or the endeared relation of those who might be found in the attitude of rebellion. When even He, standing in the room of sinners, must of *necessity* suffer—when His earnest and repeated prayer, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"—could avail nought to mitigate "the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" against sin—when that dreadful prophecy, "MESSIAH shall be cut off, but not for himself," is literally executed—here is demonstration, surely, that even Gabriel, or all the glorious company of angels, should they rebel, would incur the unmitigated severities of Jehovah's vengeance. So that the mightiest created beings will henceforth stand in awe of the Divine Majesty, and thus be held in their allegiance to His throne.

But it is not merely by a reverential view of God's justice, that holy beings are now bound to His throne. For, as has been seen, in the sufferings of Christ they have a demonstration, too, of the *benevolence* of God, such as was never before given. They perceive that "God is Love"—*Infinite Love*—that He delights in the happiness of His creatures—is ready to make a tremendous sacrifice to promote their happiness. They are thus convinced, that His government is infinitely good, holy, and wise;—that therefore it is for their own interest, and glory,—as well as for the glory of God,—to remain obedient and faithful subjects of His government. Thus it is, that angels and all holy beings are inspired with full confidence in the Divine government, and are bound to the Eternal Throne by cords of love, as well as of fear. And this train of thought is in perfect accordance with the Scriptures of God, "Who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent, that now unto the *Pincipalities and Powers in heavenly places* might be known by the Church," (that is, *by means of the redeemed Church*), "the manifold wisdom of God."

And now, in review, if a multitude which no man can number, are thus redeemed from sin and misery, and raised to heaven, and confirmed for ever in glory and blessedness; if the character of God is

thus illustriously displayed in view of the Universe ; and if Jehovah's empire is thus established forever, in the love, fear, and confidence of all holy intelligences ;—*Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?* If all this is gained by His short period of humiliation and suffering, was there not infinite wisdom and propriety in the great Sacrifice ?

Estimate the value of one redeemed soul, growing for ever in the knowledge and likeness of God ; estimate the value of unnumbered millions of such souls ; estimate the amount of joy in heaven over one sinner that repented ; estimate the bliss of all angelic minds, when they see all the ransomed of the Lord return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads ; estimate the amount of their eternal joy and the stability of their confidence, when they behold the glory of God, as it shines from the Cross of Christ ; estimate the amount of bliss for ever springing in the Eternal Mind, from the reflection, that His throne is established, unchangeably, in the love, and fear, and firm confidence of all holy intelligences ;—and tell me, poor sinner, would you rather that this great Sacrifice should not have taken place ?—would you rather that the Son of God should have sat for ever on His throne, than thus descend, to rise with this infinitely greater manifestation of Glory ?—this immeasurably wider diffusion of blessedness ? Estimate, at one view, the full amount of what we already know has been gained by the sufferings of Christ, and tell me,—can you help receiving, with liveliest faith, the Divine testimony, “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory ?”

Other objects, without doubt, have been gained by the sufferings of Christ, of which God hath not yet told us. “We here see but in part, and we know but in part.” But we see enough to make us exclaim, “Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.” And if we have one sentiment worthy of man, we see enough to make us ardent in our aspirations, hereafter to look into that Heaven of heavens, where the glories of Redemption will be more peculiarly revealed, and where the Lord God Almighty may be for ever unfolding to our view those plans which occupy His Infinite Mind !

REFLECTIONS.

1. From this subject we are led to admire the character of God's Government.

He governs good men—he governs angels—not by physical strength, but by Moral influence—not by an arm of arbitrary power, but by appealing to the noblest sympathies of Moral nature. He does not command his Potentates to take their stations, and keep worlds in awe by thunders of Despotism. But he sends forth His own Son, in the mild majesty of the Prince of Peace ; and he makes His angels ministering spirits. “ In the fulness of time,” he selects our world, as a theatre, on which to make one grand exhibition of His own character—calculated to secure the love, respect, and confidence of all worlds. And thus good beings, in all worlds, are made obedient and loyal subjects, from choice ;—not by force. This is emphatically a *free Government*. This is a kind of government worthy of rational beings, and worthy of God.

2. From this subject we are led to mourn, how exceedingly limited are the views of those, who think that the only object of Christ's coming into our world was, “ to publish a good system of morality ! and to set us a *good example* ! ”

How exceedingly limited and pitiable are their thoughts of Christ ! O, ye men of reason, who yet see no grandeur in the heights of Calvary ;—commune with your Bible—commune with your God—if peradventure ye may yet “ behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world ;” and may, like learned Paul, be brought to count all human science “ but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.”

3. We learn, how very imperfect are the views of those, who suppose, that the *only* object of Christ's coming into our world was to *sase sinners*.

This was indeed one great object, and worthy of our *endless* gratitude :—But Oh, what is the salvation of millions who creep on earth ?—what is this, compared with those glorious displays of God's character ?—or compared with that eternal confidence in His government, which is inspired among the loftier and wider provinces of His empire ? Sinners can now accept the offered grace, and angels will rejoice, and give glory to the Lamb ; or sinners can now despise the Saviour's dying love, and *trample on His blood* ! but those same angels will raise the awful halleluiah, That the Lord God Omnipotent reigns in justice, though the smoke of their torment ascend up for ever and ever !

4. We learn, in the next place, from this subject, that we ought not to distrust the wisdom of Providence, even in those events which seem *dark and mysterious*.

Little did the mourning disciples think, when their Lord was crucified and buried, that from the darkness of Calvary a Light of Redemption was bursting forth on our ruined race ! And little do we think, when clouds of fearful portent may seem to hang round our Churches, and when thick darkness broods over more than half the nations—little perhaps do we think, what a Spirit of lightning from on high may soon break forth to electrify and purify our Zion ;—what showers of heavenly influence may soon descend, to flow out in streams of salvation through the world ! But let us never despair. Let our fervent supplication ascend up continually,—*Arise, O Lord God, into thy resting-place, thou and the Ark of thy strength; make the voice of truth to be heard by those who would wrest the crown from thy head; make the voice of truth to be heard by the slumbering millions; and make thy name glorious over all the earth.*

5. From this subject let Christians be provoked to *self-denying sacrifices* in the cause of humanity, and untiring *devotedness* to the Saviour.

Says St. Paul, “ The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead ; and that He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him, that died for them and rose again.” O Christian—knowing the terrors of the Almighty, when pressing heavily upon a poor convinced sinner ; knowing the only Saviour, who could remove that heavy load of guilt ; knowing the only Rock of Safety amid the terrors of a crumbling Universe ; having seen the glory of a reconciled Jehovah, “ as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ ;” can you ever cease to pray, that others also may build on that Everlasting Rock—and that “ we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the Glory of God, may be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord ? ” Having stood on Mount Calvary, and seen, with an eye of faith, that great Sacrifice, which fills heaven with adoring wonder and praise ; having “ entered into the holiest by the blood of Jesus ;” and held “ communion with His Father and your Father—with His God and your God ;” and having a “ name written in the Lamb’s book of life,” for your security when “ worlds are burnt up ,”—can you now shrink from any effort, which might make an ungodly world to feel, that there is Foundation to the Christian’s faith ?—Can you decline any sacrifice, which might quicken the wings of “ the Angel having the everlasting Gospel to preach ? ” Remember, brethren, *your responsibility is greatly increased by your knowledge of duty and your personal relation to the Saviour.* Possibly a thousand fold heavier weight of responsibility rests upon you, than upon your rich and cove-

tous neighbours. Now, then, when the Redeemer's Great Promise is fulfilling—when His Spirit is hovering around us, and is beginning to move on nations long enveloped in darkness ;—let there be a moving Army of the faithful ;—let our “ youth of promise,” and all “ the saints bestir themselves like angels ;”—let the ministers of God be “ flames of fire ;”—from the “ high places of Zion” let there be a going forth of all that is elevated in thought, and bold in enterprise, and self-denying in piety, for shaking this poor drowsy world, and bursting away from it the chains of darkness and hell, and reclaiming its enslaved nations to the holy empire of God. And do thou “ gird on thy sword, O Most Mighty ;”—make the *groans of the prisoners* to be heard by the sleeping *Churches purchased by thy blood* ; and make thy last Command Omnipotent, as the trump of Judgment, over all the selfishness, hypocrisy, and pride of men.

6. From this subject let the wicked and the worldling, amid the blaze of gospel light, be constrained to repent and believe.

Sinner, *look on Him, whom you have pierced, and mourn.* Can not the love of Christ dissolve your soul in sympathy and penitence ? When he poured out that blood, “ which was to sprinkle many nations,” all Nature seemed to sympathize in His sufferings. And why did the rocks rend ? why did the earth quake ? why did the dead awake ? why did the sun hide in darkness ? why did the Eternal Son assume our nature, and expire in agony ? It was that He might redeem rebels, such as we are, from *eternal burnings*, and wash them from guilt in His *own blood*, and clothe them in the splendour and *likeness of their Redeemer*. And have you no gratitude ? Is your heart harder than the rocks, which rent asunder !—more insensible than the dead, who started from their tombs ! Ponder well the bloody theme. For “ there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin ;” and *never* will you repent—*never* will you abhor sin—*never* will you love Christ—if not when standing by His Cross, and “ beholding how *He loved us.*” Was ever love like this ? The Son of God yielding to death, “ *for your sakes !*” And what a Death ! It was not that “ His face sweat as it were great drops of blood ;”—not that His hands, and feet, were *nailed to the accursed tree* ;—not that His head was *crowned with thorns*, and His body pierced by the *soldier's sword*.—It was “ the hour of the travail of His soul !”—It was the hour, when He, whose “ sword is bathed in heaven,” cried, “ **AWAKE, O SWORD, AGAINST MY SHEPHERD, AND AGAINST THE MAN THAT IS MY FELLOW.**”—Enter into the meaning of those words, coming, as they do, from the mouth of the

Almighty! Think of that sword of Omnipotence, descending with its dreadful weight upon God's own Son! and remember, *He was our Substitute!* "He was wounded for *our* transgressions; He was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace was upon Him; and by *His* stripes *we* are healed." Blessed Jesus! and didst thou *voluntarily* bow *thine* head beneath the stroke, and thus finish thy part of the Holy Covenant?—and shall we not repent of sin, and believe on thy name?

In view of that Covenant, sealed with blood, does one heart still linger, and "go after its covetousness!"—"RETURN UNTO ME, FOR I HAVE REDEEMED YOU, SAITH THE LORD." It would seem as though in view of such a Treaty, issuing in broad characters from Heaven, and ratified with blood on earth, a wicked world would, at once, give up their rebellion, and would say with one voice, "Lord, we do return to thy kingdom." O haste, then, sinner, hasten, with true penitence and faith, to lay hold on that Covenant-promise, for to-morrow may be too late. "God is angry with the wicked every day." "His Spirit shall not always strive." And you never hear His thunder, till the lightning has struck! O haste, then, "to be found in Him, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," for there is no other Refuge from the thunder of His indignation!

Fellow-sinner, take in good part this lengthened expostulation; for "precious blood" has been shed! and other *blood* is at stake betwixt thee and me. I now leave thee at the foot of the Cross. *There* only is mercy. And "to-day" only is there any *promise* of forgiveness to the penitent. Then "seize the kind promise;" for "we know not what shall be on the morrow." *To-day*,—all ungrateful and rebellious as thou hast hitherto been, thou canst not open thy Bible, without being struck with the affecting truth, that the kindest words that ever dropped from the lips of God or angel, are addressed directly to thyself;—"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord."—But *to-morrow*, "this gospel of the kingdom may be taken from thee."—Or rather, that Holy Spirit, who alone can "guide thee into all truth," may be withdrawn,—and thou be left to "believe a lie." I hear a more than mortal Voice whispering, that even this day's announcement must be to each of us "a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death." If the benevolent groans of Calvary, which shook the earth and darkened the heavens, do not move our hearts, and establish our faith,—we do know, that every echo of those groans, that falls on our ear, must aggravate our condemnation, when the earth and heavens are dissolving! God of Judgment! "who amongst us shall abide the day of thy com-

ing!"—when our own works, and our holiest Ordinances do testify against us!

7. The reflection very naturally follows, that *incurrigible* sinners must be punished with immeasurable severity.

Say not, in hardening impenitence—"It will surely be well with the wicked, because God is merciful." We see to what results even the *mercy* of God *may* lead! It was *Infinite Mercy*, that burst in *thunder* on Calvary!—and wakened that agonizing cry, "My God, my God, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" And sinner, "if these things be done in the Green Tree, what shall be done in the dry?" *Infinite Love* could thus reveal itself in almighty vengeance on the Son of God, "who knew no sin," but only deigned to be our Substitute.—Oh, in what *untold* vengeance must it come on those, who are *personally guilty*!—especially if their guilt is aggravated a thousand fold by a wilful rejection of the All-Glorious Substitute! As you value life, then,—or as you fear death eternal—beware how you trifle with *blood*!—beware how you trifle with the *mercy of God*, revealed in the *death of His Son*. "Whosoever shall fall on this Stone, shall be broken; but on whomever It shall fall, It shall grind him to powder." In the most benevolent deed that the Heavens ever witnessed, God has demonstrated to the Universe, that *iniquity can not go unpunished*. And having thus strikingly demonstrated, that *misery* is not inconsistent with *mercy*,—who shall dare to say,—(in opposition to God's word,)—that He will not eternally magnify "the riches of His glory in them that are saved," and in the view of all holy beings, by permitting them "to go forth and look upon the carcasses of them that have transgressed—where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched"—because they "have despised our Lord Jesus Christ?" If God failed not "to show His wrath, and make His power known," when *His own Son* was to be the victim,—and when angels started back with amazement,—think you that His abhorrence of sin will become all mildness, and pity, and weakness,—when His *incurrigible enemies* are to be the victims?—and when millions of angels are crowding round, to witness His truth, and to adore His justice! O ye blind guides—ye traitors! who cry, "Peace, peace,—when there is no peace, saith my God to the wicked;"—ye murderers! who would launch your fellows into a boundless ocean, under all their weight of guilt!—give back your delusions to "the father of lies;" "for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:" For "where the tree falleth, there it shall be:"—then "he that is filthy, let him be filthy still."

Finally, Christian brethren, we learn from this subject the great propriety of frequently commemorating the dying of the Lord Jesus.

We think it proper, in a suitable manner, to commemorate great names, and great events. The noblest feelings of our nature are thus improved. And frozen be the heart that would withhold due respect from the illustrious dead! Well then, here is "a Name, that is above every name that is named." Here is One, who, "by the offering of Himself," has released millions from the bondage of Satan, and from the pains of the second death; and raised them to the "liberty of the sons of God." Here is an Event, the blessed influence of which is now felt in both worlds, and will extend for ever. Here is the consummation of a Treaty, which binds together the Heavens and the Earth—which restores man to communion with his Maker—which breaks for ever the power of Satan—which unites in one grand Confederacy the wise and good of all ages, all nations, and all worlds;—and which acknowledges the SUPREMACY OF HIM, "whose Right it is to reign over all." In comparison with this Name and this Event, then, let names of Patriots and venerated Statesmen be forgotten—Let the ever memorable day of a Nation's birth be commemorated no more: But O, let the great Sacrifice of Him, who conquered Death and Hell, and reconciled Earth and Heaven, be often commemorated. Let these sacred memorials "show forth the Lord's death, till He come." And when, amid the wreck of worlds, this *theatre of blood* shall be seen no more, we will sing, with the "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, WORTHY IS THE LAMB, THAT WAS SLAIN, TO RECEIVE POWER, AND RICHES, AND WISDOM, AND STRENGTH, AND HONOUR, AND GLORY, AND BLESSING; FOR THOU HAST REDEEMED US TO GOD BY THY BLOOD, OUT OF EVERY KINDRED, AND TONGUE, AND PEOPLE, AND NATION."

That song is already begun. It will swell with louder and still louder notes for ever. That song tells, in few words, the full meaning of the Ordinance before us. But O, how distressing the thought, that multitudes around perceive not its meaning. The god of this world now blinds their eyes, and hardens their hearts. They cling to earth—"feed on ashes"—"grasp at wind."—But whenever their eyes shall be savingly opened—when Heaven, with all its grandeur, shall appear as desirable as a little spot of earth, or a breath of applause; when Hell with all its horrors, and the soul for ever lost, shall be as appalling as the loss of property; then will they cling to the Cross of Christ;—then will they joyfully commemorate that Death, through which believers live,—through which God is glorified,—and through which angels are bound to His throne.

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